

1970

The Price of Admiralty

W. G. Carter
U.S. Navy

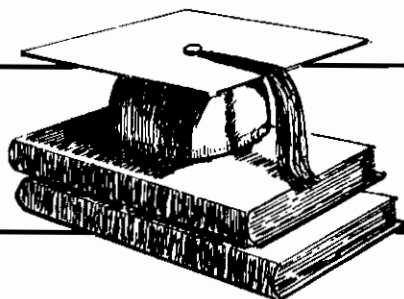
Stanley Bonnet

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PROFESSIONAL READING

Bonnet, Stanley. *The Price of Admiralty*. London: Hale, 1968, 272p.

This account of Royal Navy history commences with the era of Lord Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805 and continues to the present. The major political turning points and milestones of the Royal Navy are recounted and analyzed from sail through steam and beyond to the nuclear submarine force. Major naval problems, such as the shift from sail to steampower, the shift from destroyers to battleships, the Royal Navy negative approach to submarines, and the innovation of engineer ratings with the advent of steam propulsion are discussed on both the national and ship-board level. One can see parallel motions in the U.S. Navy of today. Just as the United States is currently resisting the change from oil to nuclear power, so Great Britain resisted the shift from sail to steam and thus began her downfall as a seapower. Evidence of the continuing opposition to structural change is found in the following policy statement of 1858 regarding the trend toward iron ships:

... it is not to the interest of Great Britain possessing as she does so large a navy to adopt any important change in the construction of ships of war which might have the effect of rendering necessary the introduction of a new class of very costly vessels until such a course is forced upon her by the adoption by Foreign

Powers of formidable ships of a novel character requiring similar ships to cope with them.

This book is very interesting reading from the point of view of a naval historian. The rise and fall of the Admiralty is objectively accounted for in an unemotional framework. The work is recommended for one who is interested in the actions and reactions of maritime forces when pitted against frequent changes in government and resultant shifts of command and privileged pressure groups within the Admiralty.

W.G. CARTER
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Fischer, Louis. *Russia's Road from Peace to War*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. 499p.

Louis Fischer's book treats of Soviet foreign relations between 1917 and 1941. This reviewer's reaction to the book may or may not be typical, but he found the style difficult and the book hard to read. The detail given is sometimes overwhelming, and the "themes" are not much highlighted. Consequently, it is easy to get lost unless one is a professional historian. The book is divided into three parts. Part One ("Forging a Foreign Policy") is over half the total length, while Part Two is about 150 pages ("Hitler and Stalin"), and Part Three ("Origins of the Soviet-German War") is a scant 50 pages. The "new" material in the book adds up to no great revision of previously generally